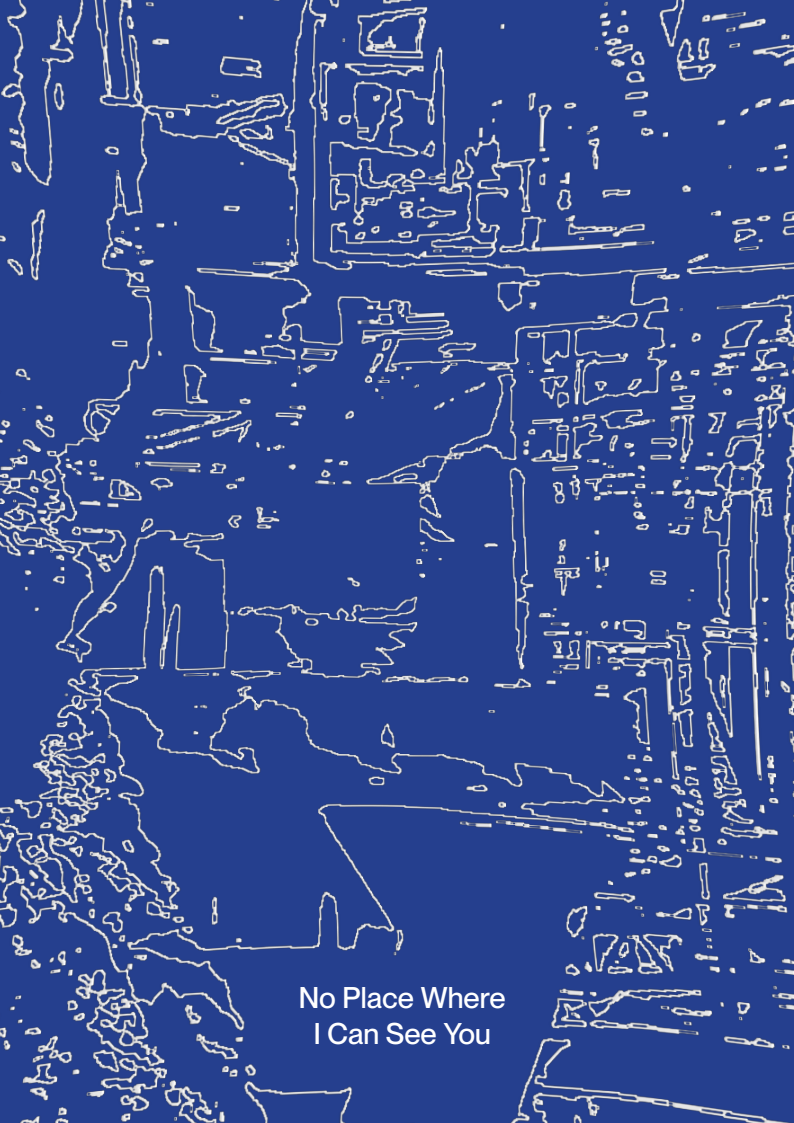

No Place Where I Can See You

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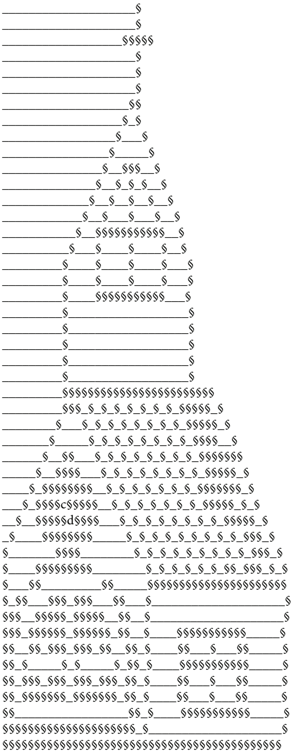
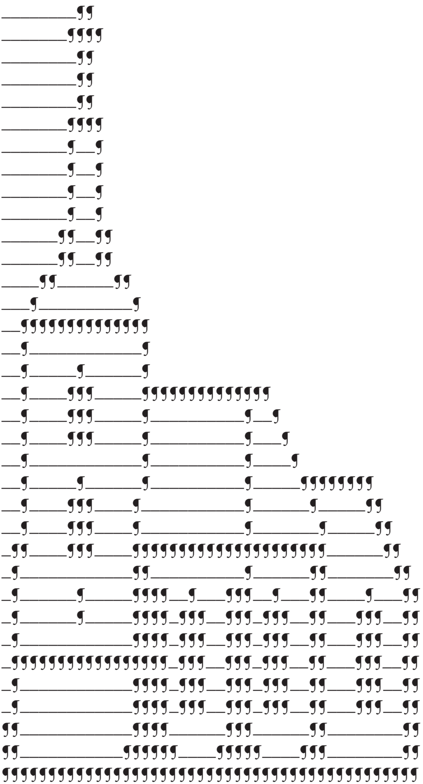
Growing up as a lesbian in Budapest, I was sure that I was going to be alone and hiding myself for a long time. I felt rejected by the places I visited the most - my home, schools, public spaces. Being me started feeling criminal, even when I was alone. I had to be always on the defensive.

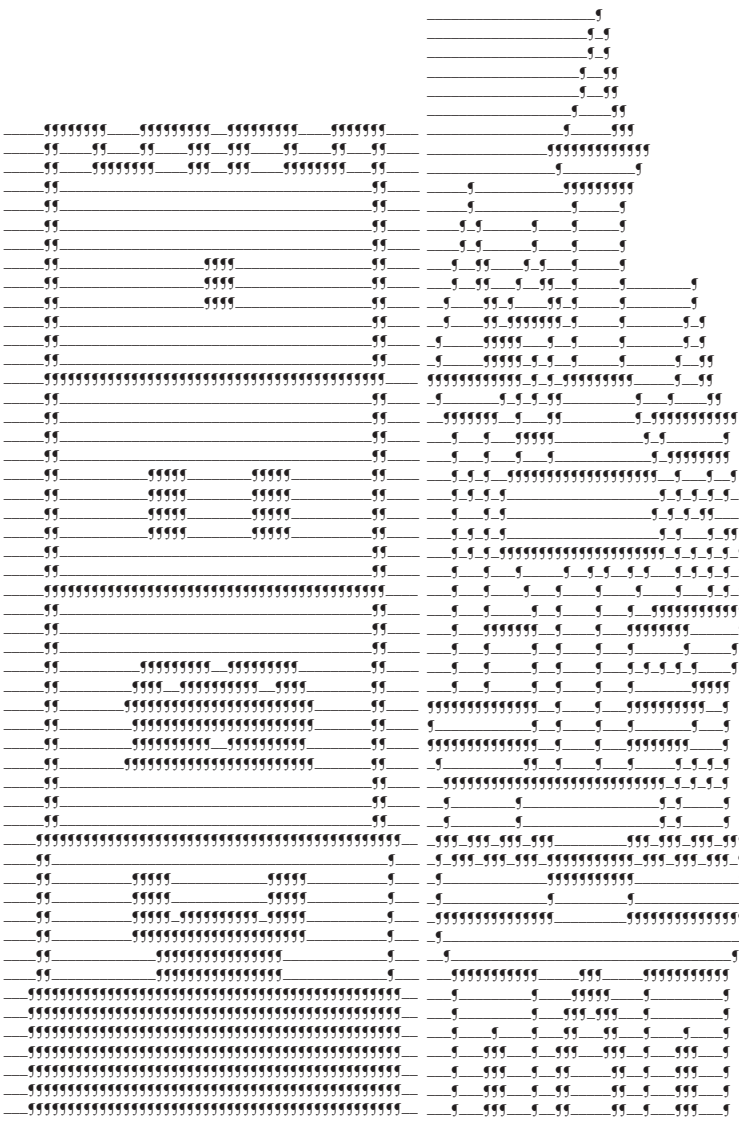
As a teenager, I dreamed of moving downtown, living alone, and disappearing in the anonymity of the city. Back then, I looked for places and events, where I could meet people like me. I found parties, organized once a month, and saw party photos of straight couples and a few queer people looking into the lens of the flashing camera. I didn't find any place that I could be myself without being seen or survailled.

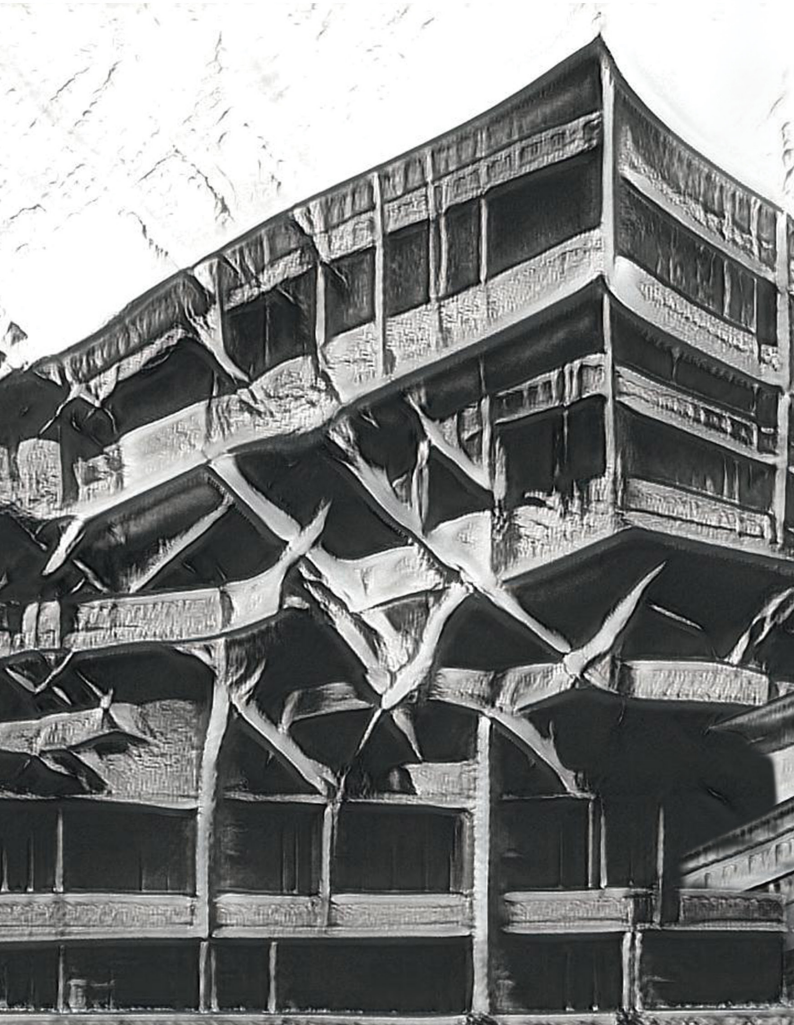
Queer people have always congregated in the peripheries of the city. Places that were slightly off of the mainstream. I watched old documentaries about queer life in New York City and felt envious about the community you could find at Bowery, the piers or the old Times Square. I knew it was never easy being gay - but maybe at times it was less lonely.

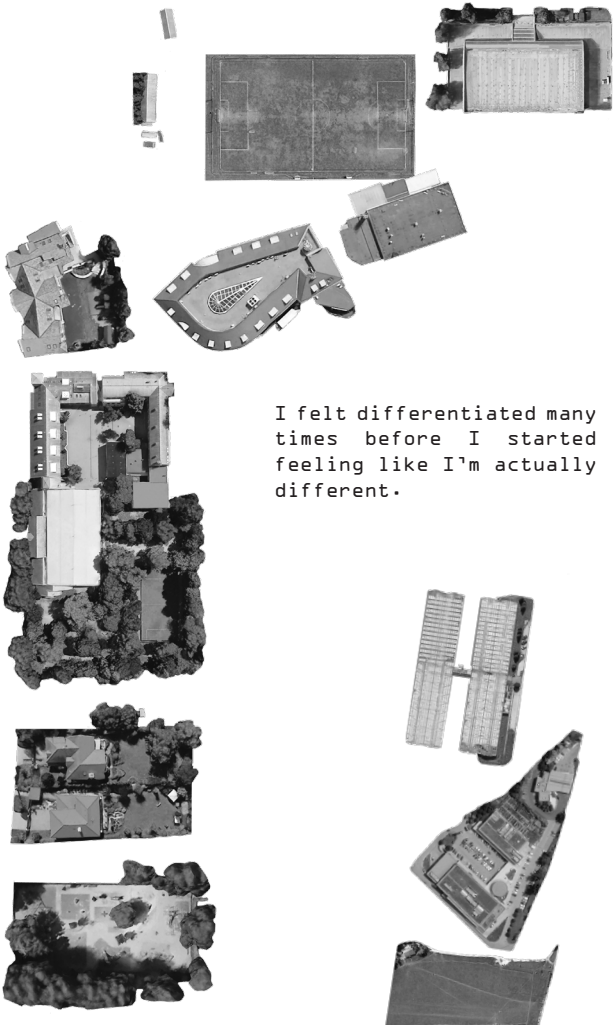
Public spaces are not neutral - they are dominated by certain dominant groups within society and also shaped by and designed for them. Queer people are hidden from our cities, just like our history is not taught and our existence is often a taboo.



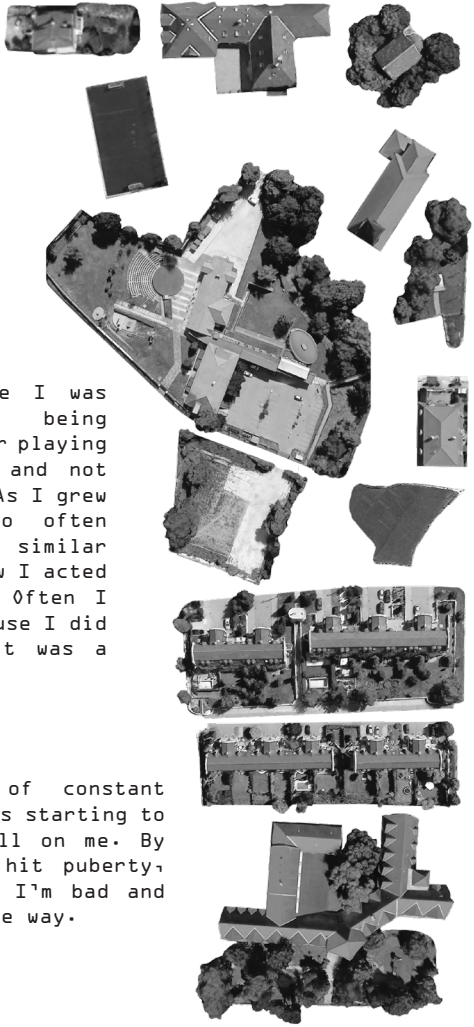






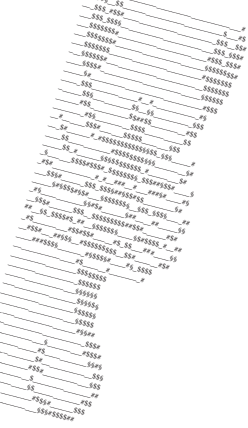


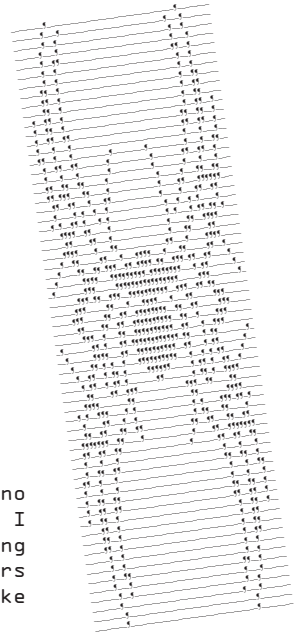
I felt differentiated many times before I started feeling like I'm actually different.



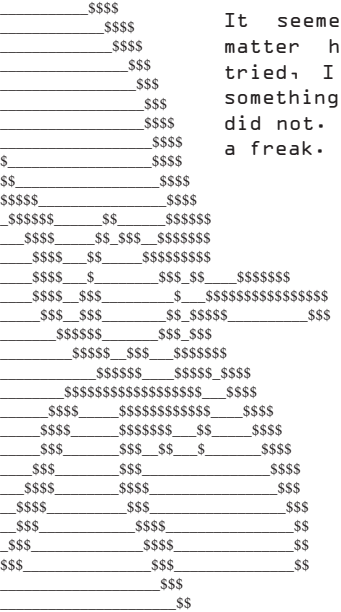
The first time I was scolded for being different was for playing with matchboxes and not “girls’ games”. As I grew older, every so often I bumped into similar problems with how I acted or looked like. Often I ignored it, because I did not feel like it was a problem.

But years of constant criticism was starting to take its toll on me. By the time I hit puberty, I knew that I’m bad and wrong in some way.





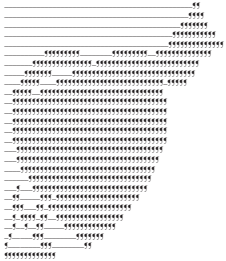
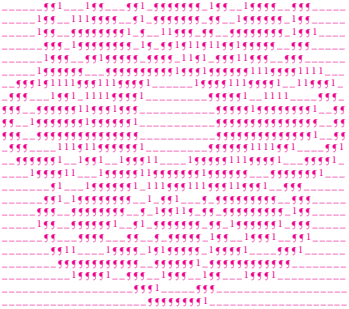
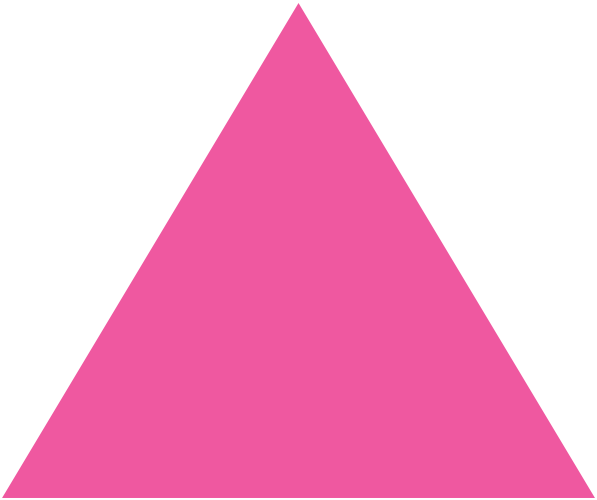
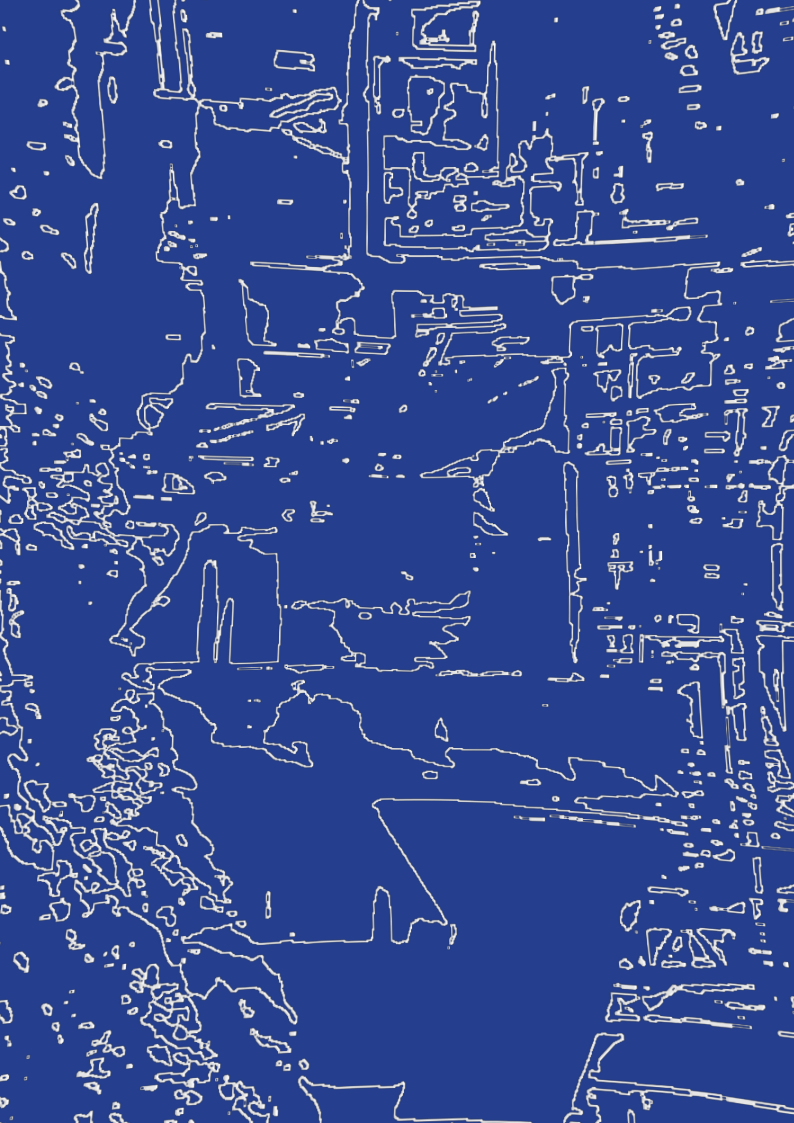
It seemed like no matter how hard I tried, I was missing something that others did not. I felt like a freak.



In *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker introduces hermeneutical injustice, which ‘occurs when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences’.

I did not know that being gay is a thing. When I found out after days of trying to understand what I’m feeling and googling that at age 13, I didn’t understand it and I did not accept it. I was full of shame.

My childhood memories are now mixed with the knowledge of what I missed out on. I see what was missing. I've moved away, cut ties with people and am trying to overcome my upbringing, unlearning the things I've been taught about myself.

Many of my friends share very similar stories to mine. A lot of them also discovered their difference in early childhood, through toys and playing. Now, I'm embracing the things I was put down for - I play with clay and hot wheels cars, I do sports, I'm gay and masculine.

I've left the places where I grew up and hope for a city where people feel safe to understand themselves.